

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6658
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4220

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR LEWIS' MEETING WITH DMC LEADERS

1. I INVITED DMC LEADER YIGAEL YADIN AND FOUR OTHER TOP PARTY PERSONALITIES--AMIT, TAMIR, WERTHEIMER, AND ZOREA, (RUBENSTEIN IS RECOVERING FROM SURGERY)-- TO THE RESIDENCE YESTERDAY TO MEET THEM AND TO HEAR THEIR VIEWS ON THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS. YADIN TOLD ME THAT EARLIER IN THE DAY HE HAD CONFERRED FIRST WITH NRP LEADER JOSEPH BURG, WHO HAD URGED HIM TO JOIN THE COALITION, BUT HAD APPARENTLY RAISED FURTHER PROBLEMS, AND THEN WITH PREMIER-DESIGNATE BEGIN. ACCORDING TO YADIN, THE BEGIN MEETING HAD NOT RESOLVED ANY OF THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE LIKUD AND THE DMC.

2. ASKED ABOUT THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF A LIKUD
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GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE DMC, YADIN CITED BEGIN'S HEALTH AS A FACTOR THAT MAKES ANY LONG RANGE FORECASTING RISKY. BEGIN HAS NO HEIR APPARENT IN HIS OWN PARTY. UNLIKE BEN-GURION, BEGIN DOES NOT ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERS AMONG HIS FOLLOWERS. THE ABSENCE OF A PROMISING REPLACEMENT FOR BEGIN MAY HAVE BEEN ONE REASON FOR HIS REACHING OUT TO DAYAN.

3. BEGIN'S HEALTH ASIDE, YADIN THOUGHT THAT THE CRUNCH COULD COME IN A FEW MONTHS WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS PROVIDING THE CRISIS. THE LIKUD WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE FROM ITS WORKING CLASS SEPHARDIC CONSTITUENCY WHICH WOULD EXPECT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN ITS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. LIKE BEN-GURION BEFORE HIM (A NUMBER OF PARALLELS WERE DRAWN AND DIFFERENCES underscored BETWEEN THESE TWO LIFELONG ANTAGONISTS), BEGIN HAS LITTLE INTEREST IN OR PATIENCE CONCERNING ECONOMIC ISSUES. WHAT CONCENTRATED ACTIVITY BEGIN'S HEALTH WILL PERMIT WILL PROBABLY BE DIRECTED TOWARDS FOREIGN AND SECURITY AFFAIRS.

4. ON THE BIG QUESTION OF WHETHER THE DMC WILL JOIN THE COALITION, YADIN SAID THAT THE DECISION IS IN THE HANDS OF THE DMC'S 120-MEMBER COUNCIL, WHICH MEETS TONIGHT (JUNE 13). SINCE EACH MEMBER HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK, A VOTE MAY NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL JUNE 14. THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER THE DMC SHOULD STATE NOW THAT IT WILL REMAIN OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE TIME BEING OR INSTEAD TO AUTHORIZE CONTINUATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. YADIN WILL OPEN THE COUNCIL MEETING BY REPORTING ON THE RESULTS THUS FAR OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT MAY NOT OFFER HIS RECOMMENDATIONS UNTIL SOMETIME LATER IN THE PROCEEDINGS. YADIN INDICATED IN GENERAL THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LIKUD WERE AT AN IMPASSE, THOUGH THEY HAD BARELY

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GONE BEYOND DISCUSSING FOREIGN POLICY AND INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF PORTFOLIOS. STILL LEFT TO BE DISCUSSED WERE ELECTORAL REFORM AND OTHER DOMESTIC ISSUES.

5. YADIN DID NOT DIRECTLY STATE WHAT HIS RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE BUT GAVE US THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD RELUCTANTLY DECIDED TO RECOMMEND TERMINATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. IN A BRIEF, PRIVATE EXCHANGE WITH ME AT THE DOOR HE SAID THIS MORE EXPLICITLY. (HE CLEARLY DIDN'T WANT TO SAY THIS DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE OTHERS, PARTICULARLY ZOREA, WHO IS ANXIOUS FOR THE DMC TO JOIN.) EXCEPT FOR ZOREA, ALL OTHERS PRESENT SEEMED TO SHARE YADIN'S CONCLUSION. TAMIR IN PARTICULAR IS NOW CONVINCED THAT BEGIN DOES NOT REALLY WANT THE DMC IN HIS GOVERNMENT, AND HAD MADE NO REAL EFFORT TO SEEK COMPROMISE. IT WOULD SURPRISE US IF THE COUNCIL VOTE WERE TO IGNORE THE APPARENT NEAR-CONSENSUS AMONG THE DMC'S LEADERS TO BREAK-OFF TALKS WITH THE LIKUD AND STAY OUT AT THIS STAGE, BUT PUBLIC

PRESSURE REMAINS STRONG ON THE DMC TO JOIN, AND NO
ONE, LEAST OF ALL YADIN, IS CERTAIN OF TONIGHT'S
OUTCOME.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

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